

Message Text

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT GW

SUBJECT: CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN LOWER SAXONY

REF: HAMBURG 0036; BONN 00763

1. IN THE WEEK THAT HAS PASSED SINCE THE STUNNING UPSET OF THE SPD/FDP COALITION GOVERNMENT IN HANNOVER AND THE DRAMATIC ELECTORAL VICTORY OF CDU DEPUTY ERNST ALBRECHT AS MINISTER PRESIDENT-ELECT, THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN LOWER SAXONY REMAINS FAR FROM RESOLUTION. DURING THE 21-DAY PERIOD STIPULATED BY THE STATE CONSTITUTION, IN WHICH ALBRECHT MUST ATTEMPT TO FORM A NEW CABINET ACCEPTABLE TO A PLURALITY OF THE LANDTAG MEMBERSHIP BY FEBRUARY 3, CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES ARE BEING HURLED BACK AND FORTH BY THE CDU AND THE SPD/FDP OPPOSITION ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR OF THE THREE UNKNOWN COALITION DEPUTIES WHO ABSTAINED IN THE JANUARY 15 ELECTION AND THE SINGLE COALITION DEPUTY WHO DESERTED THE COALITION RANKS TO CAST THE DECISIVE VOTE WHICH ASSURED THE VICTORY

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OF ALBRECHT OVER HELMUT KASIMIER, THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

IN THE PREVIOUS KUBEL GOVERNMENT.

2. ALBRECHT, IN AN OBVIOUS ATTEMPT TO FLATTER HIS UNKNOWN BUT POSSIBLY EPHEMERAL COALITION SUPPORTER, HAS PUBLICALLY DECLARED HIM TO BE A PERSON OF PRINCIPLE WHO HAS RISEN ABOVE SORDID PARTY POLITICS TO VOTE ACCORDING TO THE DICTATES OF HIS CONSCIENCE. ALBRECHT HAS LIKENED THIS INDIVIDUAL TO FORMER PRESIDENT GUSTAV HEINEMANN, WHO RESIGNED AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR IN THE ADENAUER CABINET IN 1950 IN OPPOSITION TO THE CHANCELLOR'S REARMAMENT POLICY AT THAT TIME AND WHO LEFT THE CDU FOR A FIVE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP THE NEUTRALIST GESAMTDEUTSCHE VOLKSPARTEI (GVP) AND THEN, IN 1957, DRIFTED FINALLY INTO THE RANKS OF THE SPD.

3. WINFRIED HEDERGOTT, THE FDP FLOOR LEADER IN THE LANDTAG, HAS FLUNG BACK THE CHARGE OF SPHISTRY AT ALBRECHT FOR THIS COMPARISON AND HAS, FOR HIS PART, PUBLICLY DENOUNCED THE UNKNOWN DEPUTY AS A "TRAITOR IN OUR MIDST." ALTHOUGH HIS IDENTITY MAY NEVER BE KNOWN, THERE ARE TWO LANDTAG DEPUTIES WHOSE DISENCHANTMENT WITH VARIOUS PAST PROVINCIAL COALITION POLICIES MIGHT VERY WELL HAVE LED ONE OF THEM TO SABOTAGE THE KASIMIER ELECTORAL ATTEMPT ON JANUARY 15. BOTH OPPOSED THE TERRITORIAL REFORM BILL OF THE KUBEL GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD HAVE GERRY-MANDED THE COUNTY STRUCTURE OF LOWER SAXONY AND REDUCED THE TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTIES BY CONSOLIDATING THEIR JURISDICTIONS INTO SOMEWHAT LARGER DISTRICTS. SUCH A CONSOLIDATION WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN A LOSS OF JOBS IN VARIOUS COUNTY SEATS. THE BILL, THEREFORE, PROVOKED AN INTENSE AND OUTSPOKEN OPPOSITION ON THE PART OF FDP LANDTAG DEPUTY GUSTAV ERNST AND SPD LANDTAG DEPUTY WERNER KAMMANN, WHOSE CONSTITUENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE BILL IF IT HAD BEEN PASSED. ERNST WENT EVEN SO FAR AS TO THREATEN TO WITHHOLD HIS SUPPORT FOR ANY FUTURE SPD CANDIDATE FOR MINISTER PRESIDENT IF THE LANDTAG PASSED THIS BILL. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE, THEREFORE, THAT EITHER OF THESE DEPUTIES WAS THE DEFECTOR WHO TILTED THE ELECTORAL SCALES IN FAVOR OF THE UNEXPECTED VICTORY OF ERNST ALBRECHT. HOWEVER, IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE CURRENT MURKY POLITICAL SITUATION IT MIGHT BE SOMEONE EVEN LESS SUSPECT--TO SPECULATE FURTHER ABOUT HIS IDENTITY SEEMS A FAIRLY FRUITLESS EXERCISE. THE MOMENT OF TRUTH, HOWEVER, WILL COME ON OR ABOUT FEBRUARY 3, WHEN THE DEPUTY IN QUESTION WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER TO STAND AND BE COUNTED AMONG THE SUPPORTERS OF ALBRECHT IN WHAT, ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTION, MUST BE AN OPEN ELECTION FOR OR AGAINST THE ALBRECHT CABINET

BY THE LANDTAG.

4. DURING THE TWO WEEKS AHEAD, ALBRECHT WILL USE EVERY WILE AND ENTICEMENT TO INDUCE INDIVIDUAL SPD AND FDP DEPUTIES TO DESERT THEIR RANKS FOR THE CDU. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WILL BE GREAT PRESSURE ON THE DEMORALIZED SPD/FDP LANDTAG MEMBERSHIP BY THEIR PARTY LEADERS TO RE-CONFORM TO THE FORMER COALITION DISCIPLINE AND TO RESIST THE POLITICAL SIREN CALLS OF THE CDU WHICH MIGHT PROMISE A CABINET POSITION TO AN SPD OR FDP DEPUTY WILLING TO CROSS OVER TO THE CDU AND ASSURE THE ALBRECHT GOVERNMENT OF A STABLE MAJORITY IN THE LANDTAG. THUS FAR, ALL OF ALBRECHT'S ATTEMPTS TO MEET WITH THE STATE SPD AND FDP LEADERSHIP TO DISCUSS, IN THE MOST GENERAL TERMS, THE PROBLEMS OF THE UNSTABLE POLITICAL SITUATION IN HANNOVER, HAVE FAILED. NEITHER THE SPD NOR THE FDP IS WILLING, AT THE PRESENT TIME, TO SEEK A MODUS VIVIENDI WITH THE CDU.

5. AT THIS JUNCTURE WE BELIEVE THAT ALBRECHT WILL HOLD OFF PRESENTING HIS CABINET LIST FOR APPROVAL TO THE LANDTAG UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT ON FEBRUARY 3. UNTIL THEN, HE WILL BE MAKING A TREMENDOUS EFFORT, ASSISTED BY CDU BIG GUNS FROM BONN, TO WIN OVER THAT ONE CONVERT HE NEEDS TO FORM A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT. FAILING THIS, ALBRECHT, WE BELIEVE, WILL HOPE FOR THE BEST AND, ALBEIT RELUCTANTLY, WILL TRY TO LEAD THE STATE WITH A MINORITY GOVERNMENT. IF, HOWEVER, THE CDU FAILS TO WIN A PLURALITY ON FEBRUARY 3 IT WILL THEN BE UP TO THE LANDTAG TO DECIDE WHETHER, WITHIN THE FOLLOWING 14-DAY PERIOD, TO DISBAND AND, AS A CONSEQUENCE, TO CALL FOR STILL ANOTHER ELECTION FOR A NEW MINISTER PRESIDENT.

6. AS THESE DEVELOPMENTS UNFOLD WE WILL BE REPORTING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE SITUATION AS THEY OCCUR AS WELL AS THE VIEWS OF THE PARTY LEADERS IN HANNOVER ON THE EVE OF THE FEBRUARY 3 ELECTION. BROGAN

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